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BRENTWOOD -- In their quest to become part of the manufacturing renaissance that technology and manufacturing experts predict, Brentwood leaders and business owners turned to industry insiders for advice during a business summit Wednesday morning.

"In today's economy, to be competitive with low-wage countries, you have to be innovative and creative," said Ro Khanna, former deputy assistant secretary of the U.S. Department of Commerce, and a featured speaker at the Technology Manufacturing Summit at the Brentwood Community Center. "It makes economic sense that (manufacturing) will be one solution for job growth."

During the event, Congressman Jerry McNerney, D-Stockton, lauded three Brentwood manufacturing companies for their efforts to bring quality high-technology jobs to the city.

Halt Medical employs about 25 people in manufacturing a medical device for female uterine problems. Tactical Command Industries creates custom communication devices for military and law enforcement and employs 25 workers. Braun Brush, a manufacturer of industrial car care brushes, has eight employees.

"You see the benefit of a community like Brentwood, where it is still affordable to live and work," said Karen Burns from the East Bay Manufacturing Group. The group is comprised of manufacturing representatives dedicated to sharing best business practices and industry insight.

Brentwood Mayor Bob Taylor touted the city's other assets for attracting and retaining companies, such as quality of life, family-friendly charm and agricultural base.

"We are here to learn how to support manufacturing in our region and create high-quality manufacturing jobs," Taylor said.

According to Khanna, predictions of a manufacturing renaissance is based on that sector's recovery over the past year. He noted that the United States makes about 20 percent of the world's goods and is more productive than Japan and Germany in its manufacturing workforce.

Khanna also pointed out that it is more difficult to outsource the production of specialized products with unique features needed by clients.

"We have a lot of different products with separate applications," said Jim Price, Tactical Command's business development manager. "It is the only company that still listens to customers and builds what they want."

Historically, the East Bay was a manufacturing powerhouse. Even now, 80,000 people are employed in manufacturing jobs, fourth only behind retail, education and government sectors, the speakers said.

Participants gathered tips for growing their manufacturing base, including: utilize social media as cheap and effective marketing, maintain reliable financial information, form partnerships between government and the private sector, and take advantage of classes and workforce training offered at community colleges.